

Developing a more research-oriented and participant-directed learning culture in the Australian environmental movement

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Environmental groups seek to educate and change people, yet there is little discussion and debate about the various theories and practices they use. One has only to think about the big, national environment groups like Australian Conservation Foundation, Wilderness Society, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and World Wildlife Foundation to note that they go about their educational and change practices in distinct ways. And then there are new groups like Climate Action, GetUp and Climate Camp who are seeking to educate and change people in more contemporary ways. We think that adult educators could play a helpful role in fostering more critical and participant-directed interrogation among environmental groups about aspects of their practices that focus on change and education. In this paper, we report on focus groups, case studies and a literature review we conducted for a coalition of three environmental non-government organisations and a state government agency to do just that.

Posing questions about new forms of change practice

There are four imperatives that drive us in this paper. The first is the need and desire to address climate change. The second is to pay more attention to the nature and form of strategies used by environmental groups to bring about changes in public policy, industry practices, lifestyle and consumer practices. The third is our assertion that there is an educational dimension to the actions of pro-environmental groups to bring about change. And the fourth is our interest in creating a learning culture where Australian environment groups are engaged in participant-directed analysis of their and each others' educational and change practices. And that is the purpose of this paper: to present ideas about the possible organising features to develop a more research-oriented, learning culture where this analysis will be continuous and participant-directed. In other words, how can environment groups, as they are the participants in this context, feel safe to analyse and learn from each other? To date, there has been little relevant empirical research about these aims. Hall and Taplin (2007) presented a useful framework for a 'big-picture' analysis of campaign strategies used by Australian environment groups, but they note that 'further research is required to compare the perceived achievements and political impacts of the campaigns... and to adequately assess campaign effectiveness' (p. 105). We agree that further research is required but argue there should be bottom-up or participant-directed, not just top-down, external expert-driven research.

Since 2005, climate change has emerged as the central environmental issue in rich countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (Stern 2006, IPCC 2007, Flannery 2007, Gore 2006). There has been a significant increase in public interest in Australia about environmental issues (NSW DEC 2007). A survey by the Climate Institute (2008) showed that public awareness and understanding of the importance of environmental issues was and remained ahead of both political and bureaucratic action, even after the financial crisis of 2008 had taken hold.

To elaborate on the second imperative mentioned above, a reason to pay more attention now to change and educational practice in the Australian environment movement is to respond to new forms of practice. Jeff Angel is Director of the Total Environment Centre, a non-government organisation. He asserts that membership of environmental groups in Australia is declining or at least changing. While membership of the big national groups is steady, Angel asserts that local conservation groups are dwindling. Whether empirical evidence bears his assertion out in the stark terms he depicts is not that important.

What Angel's assertion does point to is that there is a change in the type of environment groups people are joining and the actions they are taking. But more important is the perception Angel, and other experienced environmentalists, have about the need to change. Local conservation groups, according to Angel, are no longer in vogue.

Twenty years ago he was active in forest campaigns but is happy to have now moved on and be active on other fronts. Having said that membership in conservation groups is declining, Angel suggested that there is now a greater public awareness of environmental issues. This translates into people being more willing to persuade their peers about changing behaviour to foster sustainability. There is, according to Angel, less stigma in recent times associated with being 'green'. If Angel's assertions are correct, this throws up various challenges. And they are captured in the types of questions that were posed by members of the steering group that commissioned our research. In this paper, we will focus on the following three questions :

- What can environmental groups draw from research and different disciplinary traditions to inform their efforts to involve people in pro-environmental action?
- What are the new types of environmental actions and groups emerging?

- What are the ways that environmental groups can work together, share their knowledge of change, and enhance adult learning in the Australian environmental movement?

We are especially interested in ways that non-government environmental groups (NGOs) can collaborate with each other and with government agencies. This concern with strengthening the collaboration among environmental groups to support learning was a priority for the Mittagong Forum, a coalition of the main environmental NGOs formed in 1997, with the aim of broadening and strengthening the Australian environment movement. In 1999 they commissioned a study (Flowers & Parlane 2000) to improve the ways that environmental NGOs supported adult learning and training across the groups and the community.

Background

The study reported here (Flowers & Chodkiewicz 2008) resulted from collaboration between a state government agency and a number of key environmental groups in NSW, as part of a wider effort to encourage government agencies and environmental NGOs to work more effectively together by supporting research and learning about effective change practices. The NSW Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC), in partnership with the Total Environment Centre (TEC), Nature Conservation Council of NSW (NCC) and the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) engaged us to investigate and make recommendations on how environmental organisations might identify the needs of and develop support mechanisms for individual grassroot *champions for sustainability* who provide information and encouragement to people in their local area or network. We were asked to research available literature and to conduct a number of focus groups.

This research was premised on the view that sustainable living could become a core concern for the community. Whilst there are signs

of positive change with the adoption of initiatives like *GreenPower*, rejection of plastic bags, curbside recycling, installing solar energy panels, rainwater tanks and water conservation, there is still a long way to go to make it a 'way of life'. The challenge continues to be about how to reduce consumption and one's environmental footprint, while maintaining the same (or better) standard of living. The increased awareness of global warming is adding an impetus to the campaign for sustainable living.

A feature of environmental advocacy NGOs is that they seek to bring about behavioural and social change for sustainability. They rely on people who are willing to plan and facilitate action for change. We understood that the consortium partners wanted this particular research to inform their ongoing efforts to support people engaged in action for change. They were especially interested in supporting people working for change in families, communities, with NGOs and in the public arena. This research therefore focused on what would inform and support 'change-practice.'

The literature reviewed was analysed in terms of what the research tells us about the new forms of environmental action and theories of change, across three distinct domains of pro-environmental behaviours: (a) public and community, (b) family and household and (c) consumer domains. We also explored current practices of change in focus group sessions with a sample of participants who were involved as activists in these three domains, and through a number of selected case studies of projects led by NGOs.

Analysing theories of change – insights from bodies of literature

In our review of recent literature to find answers to the questions mentioned above, it became clear that it would not be possible to identify single answers or even outstanding best practice examples because there is such a variety of commentators and researchers who have diverse starting points. We propose one way of helping to make

sense of the diverse ideas and arguments is to locate them in distinct disciplinary traditions. We reviewed four disciplinary traditions and bodies of literature: sociology; political science; behaviour change and psychology; and education. There are other disciplinary traditions that are relevant; for example, ecology and public communication or social marketing. However, there is not sufficient space to discuss them here.

It is possible to identify distinct starting points in each body of literature. For example some **sociologists**, rather than asking how information and education can produce champions for sustainability, ask how can habitus (celebrations, rituals, materialities, times and spaces) be devised that will encourage them. They examine what sort of cultural capital strengthens and encourages pro-environmental behaviour. They analyse discourses. Discourses exert enormous influence over beliefs about and action towards the environment. What are the various and dominant discourses (storylines, key metaphors and other rhetorical devices) that people draw on to understand society and the environment? To what extent and in what ways have these discourses contributed to more sustainable futures? What can be done to strengthen pro-environmental discourses? There is, of course, contestation between discourses and the terms of these debates are always changing. For example:

... once areas of marshy land were called swamps. The only sensible thing to do was to drain them, so the land could be put to useful purpose. Today, we call these same areas wetlands, and governments have enacted legislation to protect their value in providing habitat for wildlife, stabilization of ecosystems and absorption of pollutants (Dryzek 2005: 3).

Political scientists pose broad-brushed questions such as: Why and when do environmentalists succeed or fail in environmental campaigns? Success is defined by influencing change in public opinion and government policies. This leads to analytical questions about the organisational structures and nature of NGOs. For example,

how will NGOs choose which battles to fight, how to differentiate themselves from one another in order to attract membership and funding, and how to decide when to form alliances and when to work separately?

A body of research devoted to **behaviour change**, largely undertaken by psychologists, focuses on how to change people's behaviours in household, community and workplace settings. A typical question that is posed in this tradition of research would be: what factors and practices lead to people reducing their energy consumption? Another challenge, once people have been involved in taking action for the environment, is how to keep them involved. This issue has been the focus of a number of environmental psychologists, such as De Young (1996) who researched durable pro-environmental changes and Geller (2002) who developed a 'flow of behavior change' model. It clearly set out three key elements in moving individuals along a spectrum – from 'environmentally unfriendly habits' to 'environmentally friendly behaviour' and then onto 'ongoing environmentally friendly habits'.

The three key elements of Geller's model of facilitating pro-environmental behaviour are providing information, feedback and social support. Providing information includes running events or expos. Providing positive feedback includes highlighting success stories, reporting back on numbers involved, successes, and recognising and rewarding effort and achievement. Social support includes making people feel they were supported, that they were part of a bigger effort by the local and global community (Staats, Harland & Wilke 2004: 343). Staats *et al.* (2004) also made the point that the most widely used way of promoting pro-environmental behaviours in household programs had been through using just one of these elements – providing information. Of the other two, providing feedback has been included less frequently, while social support has rarely been implemented in any household interventions.

Educational researchers focus on questions about learning. Part of the challenge for the environmental movement is to recognise the value of learning that takes place not just in formal settings, but also in social action and struggle (Foley 1999). An example of the richness and variety of such learning can be seen from Foley's study of learning in a green campaign (Terania Creek). This kind of analysis leads to thinking more about 'sites of learning'.

Identifying various 'sites of learning' helps focus on where, when and with whom learning happens. They are located along a continuum and can range from formal education and training (for example, courses with defined curricula), informal education (instruction that is built from and for particular events and projects such as non-violent direct action training during an environmental campaign, or an issue based seminar), informal learning (conscious and systematic efforts to learn from experience, involving individual or group reflection), to incidental learning (learning that is embedded in other activities, is often tacit, but which nevertheless continually informs action) (Flowers & Chodkiewicz 2008).

Another approach to consider is popular education. Whelan (2005) argued that taking a popular education approach provided a way of breaking out from the traditional and dominant modes of environmental communication and education. He suggested that many environmental programs in the community often focused just on raising public awareness. They provided information, featured didactic messages, and used only community-based social marketing approaches. In contrast, popular educators built their work from the daily lives of community members, addressed their social, political and structural change priorities, and emphasised collective rather than individual learning. Through a number of case studies, Whelan (2005) showed how a popular education approach created opportunities for education through social action.

We are suggesting there is a need to be more explicit about disciplinary lines of enquiry, and to consider how as adult educators it is possible to draw on these multiple lines of enquiry. And so, when examining what constitutes success of a change process, we propose it is useful first to identify what type of change is being facilitated. We take as a given that ultimately all efforts aim to change and improve the state of the environment. But there are various aspects that must change first in order for the state of the environment to improve. Table 1 summarises the areas of change and matches them to particular disciplinary traditions.

Table 1: Areas of change and disciplinary lenses

Areas of change	Disciplinary lenses
Organisational and social values, cultural norms, social movements and community aspirations	Sociology
Public policy and social movement strategies	Political science
Individual, household, organisational practices and behaviours	Behavioural change and psychology
Awareness, knowledge, values, attitudes, language, skills and competencies	Education

Participation in the Australian environment movement

The community-based environmental movement continues to involve significant numbers of people across Australia. According to Hutton and Connors (1999), by the late 1980s at the end of an intense period of campaigning and growing professionalism among environmental NGOs, there were more than 300,000 members of these groups Australia-wide. Indications are that overall membership numbers have grown since, but the available data is only partial, and it is difficult to provide a comparison between the older

established groups and the newly formed groups. Table 2 reports on the membership of a number of the larger, more established environmental groups.

Table 2: Membership of the more established groups

Group	1998	2006
Landcare/bushcare	164,600	130,000
Greenpeace	n.a.	130,000
National Trust	78,000	n.a.
ACF	60,000	n.a.
Other	166,500	n.a.
Total number	469,100	n.a.

It shows that, in 1998, an estimated 469,100 people were members of environmental groups in Australia (Lennon 2001). A breakdown showed that 164,600 people belonged to a Landcare or catchment management group, 78,000 were with the National Trust, 60,000 in ACF, and a further 166,500 in a range of other smaller groups. Recent studies show that, by 2006, Landcare groups and Greenpeace each had about 130,000 members across Australia (Ragusa & Holden 2006), and there were well over a thousand environmental groups in NSW (Herriman *et al.* 2007: 3), with the NSW Nature Conservation Council (NSW NCC) representing 114 of the more established environment groups. In NSW in 2007, among the 1,863 Landcare groups across the state, the membership totalled 47,780 (Landcare NSW 2007).

Table 3: New groups – members, groups, participants

Group	2007
GetUp	230,000 members
Climate Action Movement	130 groups
Climate Action network	67 organisations
Climate Camp	1,200 participants

Among the new groups (Table 3) is *GetUp*, which includes among its campaigns a significant number addressing environmental and climate change issues. From 2006 the membership grew quickly so that, by the end of 2007, *Get Up* had more than 230,000 members registered online across Australia (Flowers & Chodkiewicz 2008). Also important is the new climate action movement, which in 2007 had more than 130 *Climate Action Movement* groups set up across Australia, with 57 of them in NSW (NCC 2008) and more than 67 affiliated organisations were part of the *Climate Action Network Australia* (CANA 2008). Another new important form to emerge was the community-based *Climate Camp*. Organised by a coalition of groups, it brought together more than 1,200 participants in a mix of discussion, learning and action over four days in Newcastle in July 2008 (Climate Camp 2008).

Analysing practices of change

In the focus groups we organised and the case studies we researched, we studied change practices in a number of domains – including the public policy and community action domain, the family and household domain, and the consumer and market domain. Here we will highlight a number of the themes that emerged across these domains related to new ways of engaging people to become more involved in pro-environmental actions.

Overall we found in our study that NGOs were continually struggling with change and with finding a balance between staying with the 'old' and developing the 'new'. Among the main aspects they were struggling with were:

- language
- organisational structures
- ways of defining issues
- membership and participation opportunities
- ways of communicating and educating
- measuring the impact of their work
- priority-setting about whom they seek to work with.

Adult education in the public policy and community action domain

A strong feeling emerged in our discussions of a real divide between new and old forms of organising, and between what appealed to younger people (16–35 year olds) and older people (50 years and over). These views seemed to leave out families with older children and the middle aged (35 to 50 year olds). Asked about membership of environmental groups, focus group participants who were experienced activists felt that membership of established, community-based environmental groups had fallen over the last decade. Another said that there continued to be significant differences among community-based environmental groups in their focus and appeal. The older more established ones, like the ACF, appealed to older people and the newer ones, like Greenpeace, to younger people.

New ways of engaging people were discussed, including an example of the new internet-based groups like *GetUp*. One activist felt that these groups were successful because they reached people in new ways and enabled people to choose more easily in which issues they would get actively involved. One focus group participant was concerned about the kinds of involvement that occurred in these new groups and what getting involved online with *GetUp* really meant. He suggested that

the level of involvement it achieved, such as having people joining online or signing a petition online, was a superficial action.

There was also scepticism about the value of participation in events that specifically focused on bringing in young people like the *Live Earth* concert in Sydney in June 2007. A union activist disagreed and said that their earlier *Rockin' for Rights* concert, organised by the union movement, was a successful event, involving and recruiting young people into the campaign against the federal government's *Work Choices* legislation. Not only did younger people get involved but many joined up as union members. It was suggested that younger people were more likely to respond if approached on the street or in a shopping centre, and they were willing to sign up as a member or to make a donation to a group like the World Wildlife Fund. An experienced activist suggested that while people would get involved in programs, new groups or new initiatives, at the same time they could be easily turned off from taking any further actions. This suggested the level of commitment to taking environmental action was weak.

GetUp

One of the largest of the new, online-based, independent, community campaigning groups in Australia is *GetUp*. It was formed in 2006 with the specific aim of building a more progressive Australia, bringing together like-minded people who wanted to increase the level of active participation in our society, and to focus specifically on political change. Set up as a non-profit organisation, it has been supported by individual donations and various non-government organisations, unions and community groups. It has a more targeted focus on the political process than the other online-based groups, and with more than 230,000 members nationwide in 2007, *Get Up* has been able to mobilise between 20,000 and 100,000 people to take actions on specific issues.

While the group generally appeals to a younger generation, its membership is drawn from other age groups as well. Most of its members join up online, and can get involved in a range of issues and campaigns. The environmental campaigns have included a *Save Our Heritage* and a *Climate Action Now* campaign. The ways that individual members generally have been involved have been by: signing up online as members and receiving a regular email bulletin; joining campaign actions by signing online petitions, and/or making donations; proposing ideas for action – such as putting up billboard advertisements to bring David Hicks home, skywriting messages above Parliament House, Canberra, on the day crucial votes were to be taken on the Migration Bill; or turning the most popular suggested ideas on election issues into funded 30-second television advertisements. In the lead up to the 2007 federal election *GetUp* members were asked to create, rate and help fund the production and airing of 30 second television ads to achieve a better, fairer Australia. Members uploaded more than 150 advertisements onto the *GetUp* site, including ones on climate change.

In November 2008, *GetUp* was involved in partnership with Nature Conservation Councils in each state in *Walk Against Warming* rallies in Australian capital cities, leading up to the government's announcement of its carbon trading scheme. Earlier in the year, it staged a *Climate Torch Relay* to focus attention on climate change issues. *GetUp* has also arranged some face-to-face meetings for members as a way of bringing people together locally. But these kinds of meetings have not been a central part of their activities.

Climate Action groups

In response to the issues of climate change, new coalitions of groups have been formed as a way of mobilising large numbers of groups and members. Various climate action groups across Australia have been brought together as members of the *Climate Action Network Australia*, which together has more than a thousand organisations.

This coalition includes environmental and climate, national environmental, environment, human rights and youth, aid and development, faith-based, renewable energy and energy efficiency, state-based and regional environmental organisations as members (CANA 2008).

As a key state-based organization, the NSW NCC set up in 2007 one of its major climate change initiatives the *Climate Movement*, which is an online hub that brings together almost 130 climate action groups around the country, with 57 of them located in NSW (NCC 2008). The website provides a space for groups to register and be part of actions on climate change that include traditional forms like media releases, submissions and mass actions. The site includes tips, resources, a 'what's on' section, and an online way to make donations. Significantly, many of the groups have only a few registered members, but they are able to reach out into their local community and involve many more people when either online or mass actions are called like the *Walk against Warming* in Sydney in 2006 that attracted over 40,000 people.

Climate Camp

One of the new forms of environmental mass activism and learning is *Climate Camp*, which began in the United Kingdom in 2006 and has inspired events in Australia, New Zealand, United States of America and Germany. A coalition of groups including Rising Tide, Australian Students for the Environment Network, Friends of the Earth and the Change Agency organised the first Australian Climate Camp in Newcastle in 2008. Climate Camp takes a consensus-based education and training approach to social action for environment. Taking place over six days, the camp not only brought together more than 1,200 people, but featured a major focus on discussion and learning as part of the camp.

All the climate camps that have taken place in various countries are conceived as week-long, intensive, action-oriented education events. In the case of the Newcastle camp, there was a combination of on-site workshops, forums and discussions about climate change, social change and mass action. It also featured a number of sessions providing specific training in non-violent direct action, as a lead-up to a number of direct actions by participants against the export of coal, as well as a debrief after the actions.

As a way of bringing people together and helping them to develop stronger social and motivational connections at the camp, participants were able to join together in both *affinity groups* and *neighbourhood groups*. A feature of Climate Camps in the UK has been the organisation in regions across the UK of *neighbourhood groups*, which were set up to bring people together *before* each camp.

Adult education in the household domain

ACF's GreenHome

The success of the ACF's *GreenHome* project was seen as a good example of the new ways of involving people in changing their behaviour in the home. It was the brainchild of a younger staff member at ACF and started in 2005 before the recent upsurge of public interest in climate change issues.

A feature of the program has been that people were involved through a mix of online and face-to-face activities involving three key strategies – providing information, feedback and support – as suggested by the Geller model. **Information** was important and was made available online through the website via a set of information booklets. The website also had a *GreenHome* guidebook that took people through six key areas of action – energy, water, waste, travel, food and shopping – and asked them to take part in a home challenge called the *GreenHome Challenge*. There was also an

online *Eco-Calculator* to help people work out their eco-footprint and a *Consumption Atlas* to help locate their actions within a bigger context.

The program also built in **feedback** for participants. On the website, participants received updates on the achievements of the program, reports and stories about 'successful participants', *GreenHome* workshops and events. There was also a *Green Grapevine* space on the website, where people were able to post their tips, hints and questions. There were also rewards and giveaways of various eco-products through a competition on the website. The prizes included rainwater tanks, compost bins, carbon offsets and other rewards which were handed out at workshops. *GreenHome* giveaways at workshops included four-minute shower timers, toilet flush restrictors, energy efficient light globes and No Junk Mail stickers, to help them reduce water and energy use and waste, and free home energy audits.

ACF used a government grant to organise a series of face-to-face workshops to further **support** involvement. The workshops helped to involve people by being able to talk to an ACF organiser about sustainability issues and receive information and their experiences. Of the six types of workshops run by ACF, the one focusing on transport was the hardest one to involve people in and the least well attended. Also, as part of its efforts to provide further support, local groups were set up in areas where workshops and expos had been run and where they had generated enough interest in pro environmental actions to be able to form a local group.

Adult education in the consumer domain

In discussing the ways people could be involved in changing their consumption patterns, participants in the focus groups felt there was a real difference between the 'old style' and the 'new style' of involvement. Among the new styles of activism mentioned were

some of those recent groups set up on the internet, like *GetUp*. At the same time, at a local level other new environmental groups were also emerging. A council officer said that in their local area people were getting involved in environmental courses and new environmental community groups, such as local climate action groups that were springing up across Australia.

Another new concept mentioned was re-localisation and the setting up of re-localisation groups. Re-localisation was described as a strategy to build societies based on the local production of food, energy and goods. It involved the development of local currency, governance and culture. Among the main goals of re-localisation were to increase community energy security, to strengthen local economies, and to dramatically improve environmental conditions and social equity. The new groups were described as being much broader than the old environment movement, as re-localisation groups were not only about the natural environment but also about building up the local economy in the context of the rest of society.

A representative from a national community gardens network said that community gardens are one of the important new ways for people to get involved. Community gardens are seen as new venues that are 'miles away from the old environmental group model'. This is because even small community food gardens are not just about accessing fresh food, they are also about building a sense of place and community. Community gardens had become 'platforms for education for sustainability' and were venues where a lot of education about sustainability was occurring.

At the same time, according to an experienced transport activist, the membership of their long-standing, transport action group had fallen away significantly since 2000. As a result the group had to re-focus its efforts. It had changed how it worked so that it relied on only a small group of three people, who worked mainly on gaining mainstream media coverage of transport issues. As a result of adapting and

changing their strategy, the group had succeeded in greatly increasing its media impact.

One person felt that established environmental groups were not being supported because they had an old-fashioned structure that stopped people from being actively involved in the decision-making. He felt their time had passed and that many people were putting their activism into new forms and new structures.

New eco small businesses were being established to encourage and support changes in home consumption. The founder of a sustainability business that worked both online and through a number of retail outlets suggested that many of the green consumers they met were moving away from taking big actions or joining established environmental groups. Instead, they were taking on smaller, but local, consumer actions and becoming more *green* as consumers. So instead of giving to a major group like *Greenpeace*, they were prepared to spend money on installing energy efficient lights, getting a rainwater tank or putting solar panels on their roof. He suggested that acting in this way people felt that they were able to make a difference. He also emphasised how important it was to help people to take small steps at first and to always give people positive feedback about any actions they had taken. This encouraged them to keep on going and to take on more actions for the environment.

The attraction of new environmental events was also mentioned, as was the need for activists and groups to come up with new ideas and innovative ways of bringing people together in actions for the environment. This was not easy to do, but when it worked, large numbers of people were willing to get involved. Events like *Earth Hour* and the *Live Earth* concert in Sydney were mentioned. *Earth Hour* in March 2007 had managed to involve almost a million people at a local community level across the city, much more than the numbers that organisers had expected or hoped.

Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper, we posed three questions and we would like to draw together a number of key points in conclusion. Before we do that, we should reiterate that the purpose of this paper has not been to present an analysis of the relative efficacy of the theories and strategies of change that we have described and discussed – that would be a large-scale and continuous project that requires development. And adult educators with a bent for continuous learning and action research are well-placed to do that development work. In this paper, we have pointed to both research studies and community-based initiatives that can assist with that process.

What can environmental groups draw from research and different disciplinary traditions to inform their efforts to involve people in pro-environmental action?

There is little discussion and debate between environmental NGOs about the best ways to involve and support change-agents for environmental sustainability. And so, we think the answer to the question is that Australian environment groups should engage in discussions and debates with each other about theories and practices of learning and change, drawing on the various bodies of literature and not just relying on one kind of research or approach.

What are the new types of environmental actions and groups emerging?

There is a new generation of social change groups such as *GetUp*, the *Climate Action Network* and *Climate Camp*. There are new forms of action in household and consumer domains like ACF's *GreenHome* project, the NSW NCC's *Climate Challenge* or the new eco-businesses that are involving and supporting people. In some cases, they argue for new forms of change theories and practices. This is providing rich opportunities for robust discussions and debates between older and newer groups. Our study has confirmed that environmental change-

actions are no longer confined to activism in the public policy domain. There is a new focus on facilitating learning and change in household and consumer domains. Likewise, 'activism' is no longer confined to campaigning and petitioning. Environmental groups are devising projects, often using new technologies that include participant-directed activities featuring both online and face-to-face involvement. There is more direct engagement with people who are non-aligned to major environmental groups in a variety of ways that include simple petition signing, e-participation in discussion and ideas forums, donations, and participant-directed devising of various materials – for example, television or internet-based advertisements. There is a wider use of distributed as distinct from centralised leadership models. This can be seen, for example, in the support of the local climate action groups and networks that have been established.

What are the ways that environmental groups can work together, share their knowledge of change, and enhance adult learning in the Australian environment movement?

There are two broad points to be made here. The first is that NGOs in Australia represent a substantial part of the total effort to facilitate behavioural and social change for more environmental sustainability and yet there is little support and adult education available that is dedicated to this part of civil society. The second point is that our paper points to an approach to theorising about adult learning that goes beyond training and information campaigns. We suggest that theorising about adult learning in the Australian environment movement would benefit from a more explicit, inter-disciplinary approach that draws on research findings and takes into account various sites of learning.

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